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ABSTRACT

This paper is the second in a series exploring the impact of changing proportions of youth in our society. It attempts to verify the theory of demographic discontinuity (see SO 013 568) through historical analysis. The main part of the paper presents a careful analysis of five historical situations that are generally recognized as being important points of turmoil in western Europe. These are as follows: (1) the post-Napoleonic period culminating in the revolutions of 1830, (2) the revolutions of 1848, (3) the pre-World War I period, (4) the depression and pre-World War II age, and (5) the revolutions of the 1960s. The author concludes that the theory of demographic discontinuity seems to apply better to the 20th century than to the 19th. There is more generational awareness in the 20th century, but this might be a product of the social, economic, and educational trends which have lengthened entrance into adult society and widened the number of youth involved. The more sudden the increase in the youth generation and the more rigid the existing social structures, the greater the possibility of youthful activism. The theory would appear to be most useful as a predictor in the underdeveloped or developing world, since all the factors that caused the European disorders are present in them to a degree unprecedented in Europe. (Author/AV)

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# Historical Verification of the Theory of Demographic Discontinuity

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## I. Introduction

The purpose of this part of the study is to apply the Egbert/Kluender theory of demographic discontinuity to selected European countries during the past two centuries to determine the theory's general validity and usefulness in explaining and predicting the complexities of human experiences. Europe was selected rather than Asia or Africa because the scientific, technological and industrial revolutions that characterize much of the global life in the last quarter of the twentieth century originated and developed in Europe, although the completion of these revolutions may well have occurred in the United States first. Europe also had the advantage of offering a variety of nations with distinctly different political, economic and social patterns but were relatively close to the American example culturally. The countries selected were western European--England, France, Germany and Sweden--although some comparisons will be cited from eastern Europe, especially Imperial Russia during the last half of the nineteenth century. The availability of accurate demographic data for these European countries was also a contributing factor in their selection. Starting with the 1840s, reasonably accurate data can be found for the countries, whereas data for eastern Europe and much of the rest of the world is largely conjectural until the twentieth century.

The problems of isolating and evaluating the single factor of demographic discontinuity within the extraordinarily rich and varied contexts of even these few European countries are formidable. It is a

little like trying to solve a mathematical equation without knowing the unknowns and, for that matter, without knowing the precise relationship of the quantities or magnitudes involved. For example, each of these countries underwent industrialization, starting first with England and followed by Germany, Sweden and France; the process interacted with a particular set of historical circumstances and in a particular historical context (that had profound effects). Thus, England industrialized under a governmental system that was aristocratic, parliamentary but, as the process went on, increasingly more democratic. The "dual revolutions" of industrialism and democracy were at work in England during the first half of the 19th century, whereas in Germany, industrialism coincided with the political unification of the country under an authoritarian monarchy that grew increasingly more reactionary.

The European experience has some demographic problems, too. Starting in the late 18th century, the total population in most of Europe rose rapidly throughout the 19th before finally leveling off in the 20th century.

Population Size in Millions

| Country | 1800 | 1850 | 1900 | 1940 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Russia | 40 | 57 | 100 | 210 |
| Germany | 23 | 35 | 56 | 70 |
| Italy | 18 | 25 | 33 | 44 |
| France | 28 | 36 | 41 | 40 |
| England | 11 | 21 | 37 | 42 |

Not only did the total population increase, but the composition of the population changed. Each successive generation was larger than its

predecessor, and the average age of the entire population declined much as it does in present-day underdeveloped countries. The ratio of the younger 15-29 age group to the 30 and over age group increased steadily until it reached in England almost 65% in the late 18th century and over 70% by the late 1840s.[1] Despite the enormous increase in population in Europe, the ratio of the 15-29 age group to the over 30 age group never reached the high percentages that are common in the underdeveloped nations of today. Europe peaked out at 60% and 70% while 80% to 90% is typical of modern underdeveloped nations.[2] In the case of Europe, the introduction of better diets and health improvements throughout the 19th century meant a gradual decline in the death rate with its attending increase in youth. The decline of the death rate involved the survival of children and young adults more than just the prolongation of life in the older age group. As in the case of today, the reduction of the death rate meant survival of a greater number of children primarily and a disproportionately larger increase in the population in the 15-29 age bracket.

In contrast to the European experience of the 19th century, the rise in population in Asia, Africa and Latin America after World War II has been spectacular. Whereas improvements in health, hygiene and nutrition came slowly in Europe, the application of modern biochemical and other scientific knowledge has been sudden in the underdeveloped countries. Other factors that reduced the suddenness of the impact on Europe were the deliberate efforts of some farmers and other commoners to limit the number of their progeny for economic reasons, the mass emigration of many to America and a new social movement to limit family sizes in western Europe during the late 19th century, factors that do

not seem present in the underdeveloped nations of today. In brief, Europe's "population explosion" was not nearly as sudden and presumably its impact not as great as it is in the underdeveloped nations of today.

In addition to demographic problems, there are semantic and methodological problems in applying the theory of demographic discontinuity to Europe in the past two centuries. Traditionally European historians have been reluctant to employ precise definitions to such terms as generations, youth movements and birth cohorts. Instead they prefer the more loosely defined terms that are associated with a specific chronological period or event. Thus they speak of the Napoleonic generation, the 1848'ers, the lost generation of World War I or the activists of the 1960s. What they mean by this is a term that, following the theoretical work of Karl Mannheim, sociological demographers have advanced as a suggestive concept of a "cohort". In their parlance, a cohort is a group of individuals who have shared a significant, usually traumatic, experience in their life, such as a war, revolution or depression, and this common experience shapes their way of viewing life.[3] The cohort includes people of all ages, it is a group that has been markedly influenced by an historical event, and it implies a collective consciousness in that group based on its common searing experience, although interpretations of the importance of this experience may vary widely.

Historians use the term generation in a second sense, to imply a new way of feeling and understanding life which is opposed to the former way, or at least different from it.[4] Here the meaning is defined in terms of years, usually when a generation is in its formative period,

and is influenced by certain historical events. It spans normally a twenty to thirty year period and is, as Francois Mentre labelled it, "a phenomenon of collective mentality and morality".[5] As can readily be seen, this definition is inexact, but it does imply that a particular group views itself as a generation set apart from the continuum of a nation and the age.

A third and equally vague use of the generation term implies a struggle for power between different groups in a society where age or relative position are factors. For example, the "Young Italy" and "Young Germany" movements of the early 19th century are viewed as premature attempts by the young to seize political power from the older and entrenched group by espousing new doctrines of nationalism and national unification. The same case can be made for the activists of the 1960s who rallied against the "establishment" and outmoded institutions that were thwarting and preventing the free and full development of the human potential of all. In this sense, the historians' use of such terms as "generational conflict" and "generational differences" is largely a description of the struggle for power in any of a myriad of political, cultural, religious, economic or social realms.

Another troublesome concept used by European historians is the youth movement. There is ample sociological evidence to suggest that contrary to the general stereotype youth in Europe have not been more noticeably radical, liberal or politically active when compared to their elders. They are just as passive, apathetic and inclined towards privatism as the vast majority of adults.[6] There are, however, many identifiable youth movements in Europe when, for some definite period of time, young people have recognized themselves as a distinct social

group different from, and usually at loggerheads with, the older generations. Quite characteristically when youth does identify itself in this manner, it is usually denounced by the older generation as a disrespectful, rebellious and revolutionary counterforce. Often youth movements will merge with other movements and quickly lose their particular identity. For example in the revolutions of 1848 and 1968, student movements aimed primarily at university reforms became so enmeshed in general political reforms that they soon lost their identity.[7]

Even the concept of what constitutes youth is slippery. The idea of youth as a distinct period between childhood and adulthood seems to be the product of twentieth century sociologists and psychologists. John Gillis pointed out, the youth in pre-industrial Europe were normally considered to be from the age of 7 or 8 until marriage in the mid or late twenties.[8] Throughout most of the 19th century, the only groups that are singled out as youth are the students and, at times, apprentices and journeymen with economic and political grievances. Indeed, students were thought of as being synonymous with youth movements since they were easily identified as a separate group and were able to articulate their demands more effectively than the apprentices. Students also had the advantage of being from the middle and upper classes and, as the potential leaders of the future, they were more likely to enjoy the ear and the sympathy of the ruling class than were the working class youth. This does not mean that the students were coddled or exempted from forceful repression, for numerous examples could be cited of vicious and vengeful assaults against them. Nonetheless the social and intellectual prestige of being a university student in Europe during the 19th and 20th centuries did confer on them a status

and importance far in excess of their numerical strength. Then too, student movements seemed to touch the raw nerves of the ruling class more quickly since they strive harder to fulfill the role of the conscience of society. Student movements with their predilections for giving their allegiance to absolute ethical conceptions of what is right and true, judge harshly the older generation and their society, based largely on the discrepancy between what ought to be and what is. Whether in Germany, France or Russia, student movements start with an emotional rebellion against the older generation, a rebellion caused by their disillusionment and rejection of the values of the older groups, and end with the conviction that it is their generation's special historical mission to succeed where the older generation has failed.[9]

II. The Application of the Theory

Although the application of the theory of demographic discontinuity to modern European history is a perilous undertaking in view of the many problems, it does offer a fresh and different approach to historical understanding. The theory will be applied to five historical situations that are generally recognized as being important periods of turmoil in western Europe. They are: the post-Napoleonic period culminating in the Revolutions of 1830; the Revolutions of 1848; the pre-World War I period; the depression and pre-World War II age; and the revolutions of the 1960s. In each of these historical periods, youth played an active and highly visible role. The theory of demographic discontinuity postulated that when the youth generation (15 to 24 years of age) suddenly increases, the society has a difficult time adjusting. Youth in turn, tends to view itself as a separate group with its own set of concepts and ideals and normally appears to be more aggressive in

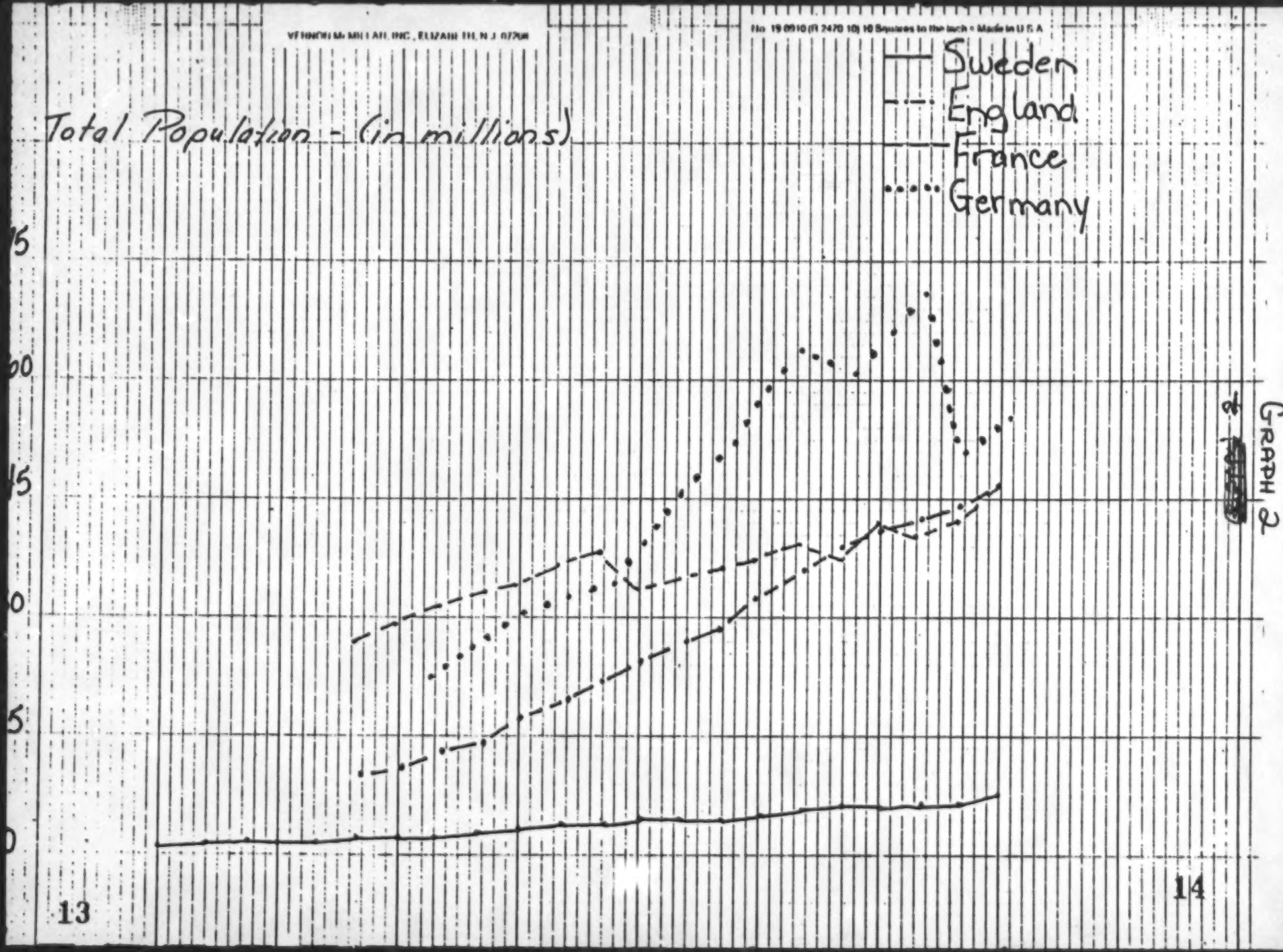
expressing itself. It is a time of increasing youth militancy and sharply conflicting sets of values between generations leading to open violence and followed finally by repression of the youth by the society at large. As Graph 1 indicates there is a correlation between the abrupt increases in the youth cohorts and the periods of unrest where the data is available. Needless to say, it would be foolish to attribute to any one factor an undue amount of influence, given the multiplicity of factors involved in any historical situation. Therefore, an examination of each of these historical situations is necessary to illuminate the impact of an increase in the youth cohort.

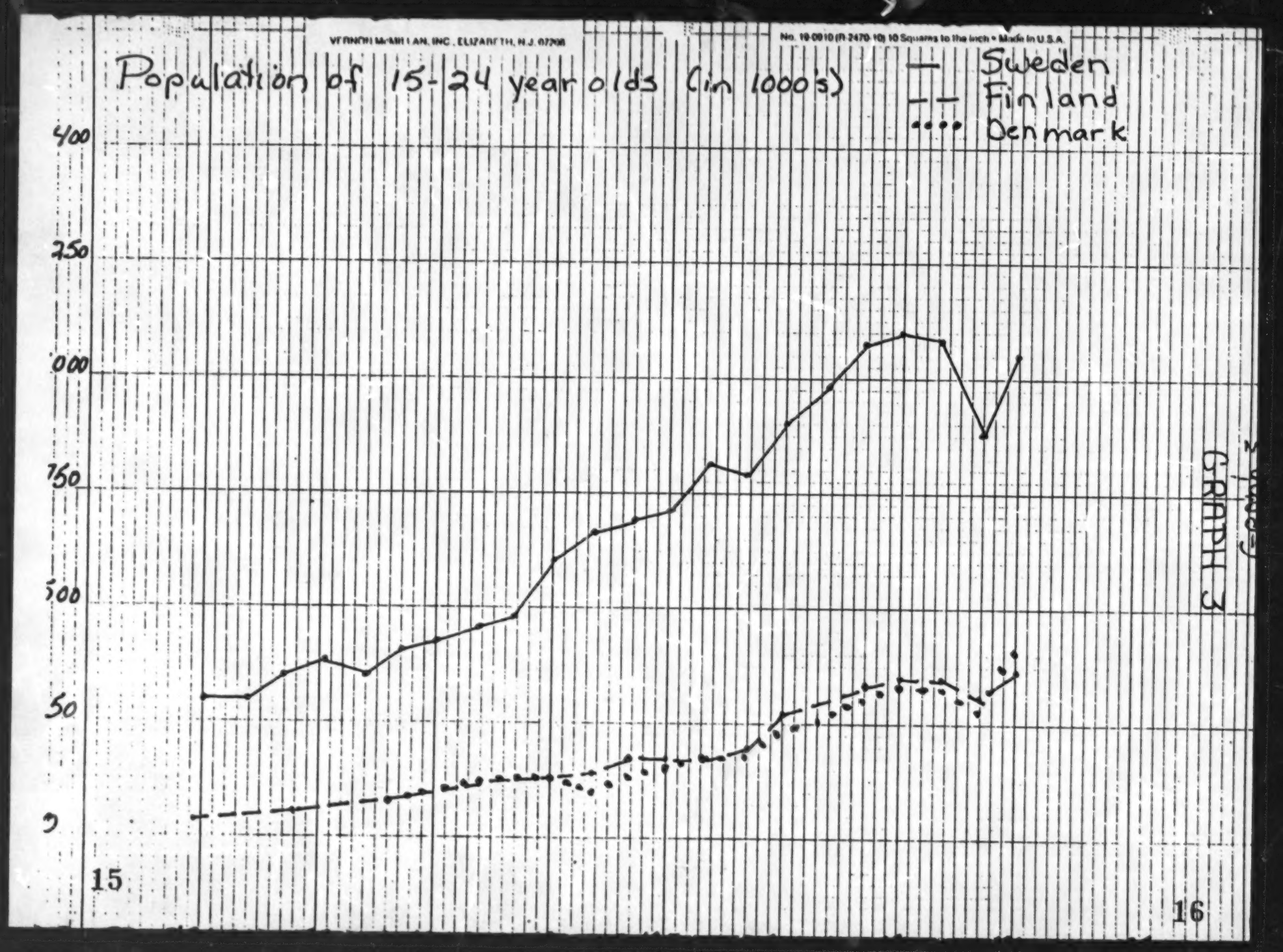
III. Post Napoleonic Period to Revolutions of 1830

Based on the general rise of population in the selected western European countries (Graph 2) and fragmented partial statistics from Sweden, Denmark and Finland (Graph 3), it may be surmised that there was a steady and rapid increase in the size of the 15 to 24 year old group in most of western Europe. Historically it was a period of great unrest directly after Waterloo, followed by apparent calm and ending with the Revolutions of 1830.

In this period the first modern student movement was born in Germany. Many young Germans had rallied around their traditional leaders to oppose the French conqueror. In the German Wars of Liberation (1813-15), young Germans flocked to the standards in the belief they were fighting for a new and greater German union--a dream that was quickly extinguished by the Congress of Vienna. Disappointed by the political leadership, many young Germans sought to preserve their dream of German unity in the secret societies at the university. The first Burschenschaft or student union was founded at the University

Percent of Total Population - 15-24 year olds
Sweden
England
France
Germany
20%
18
16
14
12
10
11
12
GRAPH 1


Total Population - (in millions)
Sweden
England
France
Germany
15
00
5
0
5
0
GRAPH 2


Population of 15-24 year olds (in 1000's)
Sweden
Finland
Denmark
400
250
000
750
500
50
0
GRAPH 3

of Jena and was pledged to university reform and national regeneration of Germany. Within two years the movement had spread to three-quarters of the German universities.[10] The Burschenschaft members were a distinct group that emphasized their generational differences by their long hair, unkempt clothes and vague ideology of Germanness, strenuous Christianity, physical fitness and liberal political ideas. In 1817 at the Wartburg Festival held to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of Luther's posting his ninety-nine theses and the fourth anniversary of Napoloen's defeat in the Battle of Nations, hundreds of the Burschenschafters gathered in what one historian called the first mass demonstration of "generational solidarity" in modern times.[11] The demonstration so shook the conservative rulers of the German states that they quickly took measures to suppress the Burschenschaften and any other forms of liberalism in the German universities. By means of the Karlsbad Decrees strict censorship was prescribed, liberal teachers dismissed, subversive students expelled and secret societies abolished; the temper of the authorities became dangerously repressive. Liberalism was muffled in Germany, but not for long.

In the rest of Europe the period from 1815 to 1830 was a restless one with simmering indignation against the conservative Metternich system that sought to extinguish the still soldering embers of French revolutionary thought. Periodically revolutions broke out forcing the major states to intervene and suppress revolutionary and even liberal activities. Revolts in Spain, Italy and the Ottoman Empire in 1820, in the Spanish colonies in 1823, in Russia in 1825 and culminating in the chain of revolts in 1830 in Belgium, France, Poland, Saxony and Hanover, Germany, shook the foundations of the old order, but did not bring it down. Even in England, riots occurred in London in 1816 and

and at Manchester in 1819, which so frightened the government that it rushed through Parliament the repressive Six Acts (1819), but even this could not stem the increasing anger, and further acts of violence occurred until the passage of the first of the great English reform bills of 1832. In all of these revolts and riots the young generation played a prominent role. They were the so-called "romantic youth", the first rebellious, young, gaudy, ideologically motivated rebels of modern times, running off to die with Lord Byron in Greece, fighting under the banners of Mazzini for Young Italy and Young Europe or struggling for the socialism of Blanqui. In Paris in 1830 the first phase of the revolution was largely youth led; students were followed by guildsmen and unemployed proletarians.[12] Everywhere there were sound political and economic grievances that undermined the existing authorities--high taxes, grain shortages, unemployment and high prices. But misery alone does not make revolutions, and it is significant that only in areas where political agitation was concentrated, such as Paris, did the populace provide the insurrectionary mobs necessary to topple the conservative regimes.[13] It was precisely in those cities that had a large concentration of "idle young" as Balzac observed, that the means for revolution flourished. Some gauge of the youth participating in 1830 can be seen in the statistic that 54% of those killed in the Paris Revolution were in their twenties or early thirties.[14]

Of all the youth involved in the revolts of 1830 in Paris, the most dramatic and, to their elders, the weirdest, were the Romantic Bohemians--the first modern counter culture group in Europe. These bizarrely dressed and acting youth had evolved a whole new set of values, a new lifestyle in the name of Romanticism. Like the "hippies" of the 1960s, they had an

alternative ideology and lifestyle that varied widely from worship of art for art's sake to Eastern religions and drugs. They were a sociologist's dream--a distinct subculture of outsiders, of drop-outs, who rejected the bourgeois culture of their elders.[15] They had turned the premiere of Victor Hugo's play Hernani in February 1830 into a "happening", or as it was called then, a "Battle of Hernani"--a genuine clash between opposing ideologies. It was such passion for new ideas that fueled the flames of revolution in France, and in the "July days" of 1830, the Bohemians played their part in the barricade fighting that brought down the monarchy of Charles X.

In other revolutions of 1830, youth did not play as conspicuous a role as they did in Paris. The revolutionaries, as always, were a hetereogeneous group of artisans, peasants, students, bourgeoise and aristocrats motivated by the spirit of the French Revolution's slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity. Outside of Paris the youths' causes were subsumed in the more general socio-political causes of the populace at large, but 1830 in Paris did mark the revolutionary debut of the "youth" of modern Europe.[16]

IV. The Revolutions of 1848

With the Revolutions of 1848 Europe experienced a surge of spontaneous revolutionary movements the like of which it would not see again until 1968. From Sicily to Denmark, from France to Austria, the revolutions spread, sparing only Russia. With incredible speed, revolutionaries took to the streets toppling kings and princes; republics were declared, constitutions written, and the surge looked invincible. Contemporaries attributed the universality of the revolutions to the plottings of

secret societies, but in fact they had little influence upon what actually happened, for the nearly simultaneous fall of governments was caused by a variety of complex factors. Many revolutionaries wanted substantially the same things--constitutional government, uniting of national groups and an end to feudalism. On that much they agreed; beyond that there was disagreement and confusion. Almost as fast as the revolutions succeeded, they failed. Internal dissension, fierce national jealousies and conflicting socio-economic ideologies fragmented and weakened the revolutions, allowing the still virulent counter-revolutionary forces to reexert themselves. By 1850 it was all over; the revolutions had hit some objectives, missed others and triggered a chain of unexpected consequences.

As in the case of 1830 the students either started the revolution or were in the forefront of the struggle for unity, freedom and equality. Mostly they were from upper, educated bourgeois families with a strong sense of generational solidarity, a burning conviction to regenerate the entire social fabric of the time and an empathy for the starving artisans and peasants.[17] They soon forged a short lived alliance between themselves and the masses that brought down the old regimes. As one historian wrote:

> The youth of 1848 had courage, commitment, and the willingness to take vigorous action against evils their elders had apathetically tolerated for generations. But they had the vices of their qualities as well: a proneness to violence and extremism, a weakness for rhetoric, and a tendency to see the world in ideological terms that simply did not correspond to their own real circumstances. In the violent March days and in the barricades of May, their virtues had carried them to astonishing victories. In October, as their short, six months' tenure in power drew to a close, their weaknesses were clearly to the fore.[18]

For a brief period student radicalism came together with the

the artisan's movement, the emancipation of the peasants, and the political aspirations of the middle class in what must have seemed to be the long-awaited revenge against the old order. The alliance ruptured quickly, and all but the most radical youth found themselves soon working at cross-purposes with their former allies.

One other aspect of youth radicalism should be mentioned. Starting at the end of the eighteenth century, there was a series of crises of unemployment among the educated. This produced an unprecedented level of generational awareness among them as a life without the immediate prospect of employment or marriage loomed. For example in Prussia, the administrative trainee for the rank of assessor had to wait an average of 6.6 years for his first salaried post in 1830, and by 1850 the waiting period was over ten years.[19] There is little doubt that this "surplus" of educated persons contributed to the political radicalism of the 1840s.[20]

Examining the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, it is significant that youth played a prominent role in both. Of course, these revolutions were primarily caused by other facturs such as the desire for political goals of liberalism and nationalism. As in the case of most of the 19th century revolts, the political causes were helped immeasurably by economic factors such as bad harvests and trade depressions. Severe economic deprivation was certainly a major driving force in 1848 for the artisans and peasants, but the concentration of youth in the capital cities such as Paris, Vienna and Berlin supplied the sparks for the revolutions. In part, this concentration of youth was the accidental byproduct of economic and political factors plus the growing influence of higher education, but it was also the byproduct of a rapid increase

in the population of the youth generation. Both revolutions would support the major contentions of the theory of demographic discontinuity.

After 1848, youth and especially student unrest declined in importance as other groups became violently political. The growing national consciousness of the Slavic peoples in the Austrian, Ottoman and Russian empires continued to rumble through the century. The massive growth of socialism among the working classes of Europe matched nationalism as a major factor in political disturbances. After 1848 the bulk of the disorders in western Europe were political; only a few were socioeconomic. There were some violent protests against conscription, but they were nothing compared to the pre-1848 period. In part this period of relative calm among youth can be attributed to the flattening of the growth rate in the younger generation and in part to the massive emigrations of youth from Europe. After 1848 for example, hundreds of thousands of Germans, among them many youthful revolutionaries, emigrated chiefly to America.[21] This Carl Schurz generation of young Germans would play an important role in the American civil war and reconstruction period, but the effect of their departure from their homeland was to defuse the youth movements. In fact, as one historian pointed out, emigration may be potentially as good an index of social discontent as popular disorders.[22] Certainly the mass emigration of the Germans after the Napoleonic wars and 1848, the Irish after the potato famine of the 1840s and the Slavs and Italians at the end of the century, contributed to the stability of the European states by siphoning off the young, more active and ambitious people, the very group that during the first half of the century had played such a pronounced role in the revolutions. Until such time that the effects of emigration as a

social discontent barometer and as a social safety valve are better known, we may only guess at its relationship to the theory of demographic discontinuity.[23]

V. The Pre-World War I

About 1900 the younger generation (15-24 year olds) peaked in three of the four selected western European nations (England, Sweden and Germany) while slightly declining in only one (France). As Graph 1 indicates, all four nations showed a decline from 1900 to 1910 and then again a rise in three nations to 1920. It can be assumed that according to the theory of demographic discontinuity there should be an increase in youth unrest, especially in Sweden and England where the rise was more abrupt. An example of the historical evidence does not clearly substantiate the theory. In Sweden, the period of greatest unrest occurred from 1906 to 1914, and the dominant issues were suffrage, labor conflicts and rural unrest. The strikes of 1908 and the long general strike of 1909 were principally organized by the young socialists and syndicalists. Their emphasis was economic and political without a particular youth orientation.[24] However, emigration may have played a role. From 1850 on, the fluctuations in the Swedish youth generations can largely be explained in terms of waves of emigration. In the decades of 1860s and 1880s there were mass emigrations with much less in the 1870s, 1890s, 1900s.[25] It was only after the emigration flow slowed that youth unrest became more evident, but general economic and political conditions appeared to be the compelling issues.[26]

The case of England is more complex. The rapid rise in the youth generations was largely directed and controlled by the adult society

through the social control mechanisms of youth movements such as the Boys' Brigade and the Boy Scouts, and later the Kibbo Kift, Order of Woodcraft Chivalry and the Woodcraft Folk.[27] As one historian noted, the youth movements were "...carefully designed attempts to respond to their needs and demands, to harness their energies for great causes approved by their adult leaders--imperial defence, national defence, international co-operation, national efficiency, and so on."[28] Baden-Powell, the organizer of the Boy Scouts, clearly thought the movement would save Britain from the fate of the Roman Empire by preparing boys to defend the Empire. He also saw it as a campaign against radicalism and socialism.[29] He apparently was right, for despite widespread economic and political unrest in the first decade of the 20th century, English youth remained relatively quiet and non-assertive.

The case of German youth parallels the British example, but differed in its ideological orientation. Among German middle class youth the founding of the Wandervogel in 1901 was the most important movement. Unlike the Boy Scouts, the Wandervogel rejected adult leadership which was too compromised. Instead they wanted "youth lead by youth", and they sought to save Germany's soul from the pitfalls of the day, modernism, industrialization, materialism and socialism. They wanted no less than a spiritual revolution which only a generation raised in tune with nature and the German Volk could achieve. The Wandervogel, despite many misgivings of the older governing elite, forged an acceptable alternative to the socialist movement for middle class youths, but their outlook and aims were too diffused and vague to capture the working class youth. Its major historical importance was as a forerunner of the Nazi youth organization. German youth along with

the British youth displayed much "sound and fury" but was channeled and coopted by its adult society.[30]

In France, with a declining youth generation, the pattern was different. From 1890 to 1914 France experienced a period of remarkable cultural vitality characterized by a growing alienation of the artists and intelligentsia; yet the youth theme played a minor part. Politically it was a period of unrest and violence with waves of strikes and periodic violence from the anarchists, syndicalists and terrorists. But aside from the normal involvement of youth in these political and economic disorders, the youth of France was singularly quiet considering youth's role in the revolutions throughout the century.[31]

It was in the rest of Europe, especially eastern Europe, where the youth were in ferment. In Ireland, Wales, Poland, Bohemia, in the unheard of Balkan backwaters of Bosnia and Serbia, in the crumbling Ottoman Empire, but most of all in Imperial Russia, the stringent demands of the new generation were heard. From 1848 on it seemed that in Russia each succeeding generation was more militant and more radical than before. No where was the conflict between fathers and sons more clearly evident--no where were the results more tragic. University students in particular personified the moral struggles of the regime as the students literally became the conscience of the society and the driving force behind terrorism and revolution. Fluctuating wildly between aesthetic withdrawal and grass roots activism, Russian youth developed a sense of generational resentment and solidarity that was unique in Europe. The heavy-handed repression of the Tsarist government only spurred them to more violent actions. The recurrent themes of youth, violence and terror followed by cruel suppression and further

violence and terror, played like a symphony that reached its crescendo in 1917.[32]

The application of the theory of demographic discontinuity to the pre-World War I period is ambiguous. In the cases of Sweden, England and Germany where youth activism would be expected, there was limited involvement for various reasons. In the case of France, a certain passivity and privatism was evident as the theory posited, but in the cases of eastern Europe where the statistical data is weak, there is a strong correlation. These states were much like underdeveloped nations of today. They had rapid increases of populations, were on the verge of industrialization, under traditional, authoritarian rule and largely illiterate but with strong traditions of elitism and deference for learning--in short, states on the verge of modernization.

VI. Depression and Pre-World War II

After World War I in the mid-twenties, three of the selected western European nations had increases in the youth generation (15-24) while one, England, had a slow decline. As Chart 1 indicates, the rise was sharpest in Germany with a moderate rise in Sweden that flattened through the 1920s and a modest rise in France. After their peaks, the declines in all countries were precipitous until the reversal in the 1950s. According to the theory, youthful unrest should be associated with peaks if there were sharp rises in the youth population and conversely, a growing passivity with declines in the youth population.

In Sweden the peak was reached about 1920 after a rather slow rise. The major disturbances occurred in 1917 and 1918 and were related to the Russian Revolution. Riots in Swedish cities began in mid-April

and continued through May 1917, followed by a second wave of riots connected to the Finnish Civil War in February and March 1918, with a third wave in November when Germany collapsed. All three were touched off by the leftist parties seeking some kind of socialistic republic. Young people played prominent roles in these disturbances, since they were hard hit by unemployment and were objecting to the imposition of military service. Their support of leftist causes was typical of many nations and may, indeed, be an indicator of the direction that youthful protest takes, but it would be difficult to ascribe a slight increase of the youth generation as a major factor. By 1919 Sweden was quiet, and much of the youthful steam was channeled into the reform movements of the 1920s or lost through the emigration of the 20 to 30 year old age group.[33]

In France and England the appalling losses of the World War had profound effects on the youth generations. A large number of the birth cohort 1890 to 1900 was gone, and the younger generation now confronted a demographic chasm that never was to be bridged. Rather than vigorously exerting their generational demands, this generation abdicated. The older generation ruled the young easily until the world depression revealed once and for all how bankrupt that generation was both figuratively and literally. In France the youth drifted to both left and right politically, and more importantly they drifted away from the republic. In England, the youth did not risk confrontation with the establishment, but rather sought escape. It was only after the depression hit that English youth moved to more of a posture of commitment to political causes of a vaguely leftist tint.[34]

It was in defeated Germany, however, that the theory of demographic

discontinuity best applies. Germany had a sharp increase in the 15 to 24 year old generation which peaked in 1925 and then began to decline steadily. As in the case of France and England, the German generation's percentage of the population was even greater because of the tremendous losses in the war. By the time Hitler came to power in January of 1933, Professor Loewenberg estimated that the age group 20 to 45 was the largest it had ever been in modern German history. It constituted 41.5 per cent of the German population compared to 34.5 per cent in 1890 and 33.7 in 1959.[35] The conditions for youth unrest were ideal in Germany from the mid-twenties until Hitler's seizure of power--widespread unemployment which reached nearly a third of all workers in 1932; a hated republic associated with defeat and national humiliation; a pervasive disenchantment among the youth with their older leadership and a new revolutionary ideology based on a volkisch philosophy. Hitler's Nazi movement was able to capture much of this youthful unrest as it gained control over the student organizations well before achieving political power. The Nazi movement was, above all, a young movement. "National Socialism came to power as the party of youth," wrote Walter Laqueur, the historian of the German youth movements.[37] About three-quarters of the top Nazi leaders were born after 1890 and Hitler himself in 1889. In September 1930, 36.8 per cent of the party membership and 26.2 per cent of the leaders were under 30 years of age.[38] As Professor Loewenberg argues, "...the relationship between the period from 1914 to 1920 and the rise and triumph of National Socialism from 1929 to 1935 is specifically generational. The war and postwar experiences of the small children and youth of World War I explicitly conditioned the nature and success of National Socialism."[39]

From 1930 on, the 15 to 24 year old generation in the selected European nations dropped dramatically, reflecting the impact of World War I and the chaotic post-war period. By the mid-thirties most of the European countries had reversed the declining birth rate by a combination of social and economic policies encouraging more and larger families, including marriage loans and child support grants. The effects of these measures can be seen in the rapid increases in the 15 to 24 year old group after 1950. Most of these pre-war policies were continued and enlarged in the post-war period when the rationale for larger populations in Europe had largely eroded. It is clear, however, that during the long twenty years of decline from 1930 to 1950, the younger generation was much less a problem than it had been. Of course, the depression and the Second World War so dominated the period that an accurate estimation of how a society reacts to a declining generation is difficult to make.

VII. The Radical 1960s

Not since the Revolutions of 1848 has Europe or the world seen anything quite like the youth rebellions of 1968. After the placid 1950s, the youth of the 1960s turned to political activism on a scale that was unprecedented in modern times. Around the earth youths took to the streets demonstrating, protesting and sometimes bombing for an immediate revolution. Impatient with their elders, distrusting of their teachers, they wanted to radically politicize public life. In Europe they concentrated on the institutions they knew best and were the most vulnerable--the schools. In Germany, France, Italy and England they closed universities and schools and then tried to link their causes with those of the working and middle classes, but without much success.

Everywhere they frightened and immobilized governments for a time, but only in France where they achieved a brief linkage with the workers did they come within a shade of bringing down DeGaulle's conservative government. The causes were similar--university reforms, American involvement in Vietnam, exploitation of the workers, need for participatory democracy, rejection of the over-bureaucratic technological-industrial society and demand for a freer, more loving and humane society run for and by the people. How much of this revolt was generational in origins is debatable. John Gillis sees the unrest not as evidence of a generation gap, but as a tendency to "integrate youth into the adult world", while others see the unrest as a clear indicator of the increasing sensitivity of the young to the prevailing social values that they oppose.[40] All agree that, although there were many different reasons for the unrest of the 1960s, there was among the young a pattern of alienation which took many forms, including youth culture, crime, drugs and political protest. The youth of the 1960s may not have been any more active in day-to-day political affairs, but they became aroused when the large moral issues emerged. Again as they had done in the past, the youth generation sought to be the conscience of the society, the saviour of its moral soul. Their aspirations were almost as soaring as their rhetoric. "We are inventing a new and original world. Imagination is seizing power," and "Let's us be realistic and demand the impossible," as two of the more famous graffiti at the Sorbonne had it.

As far as the theory of demographic discontinuity applies, the revolts of the 1960s seem perfect. In those European nations with large increases in the youth generation the unrest was most pronounced, while in the nation with only moderate changes the unrest was least

evident. As in the case of the revolutions of 1830 and 1848 these revolts were youth inspired indeed, led by students from the well-educated middle class of Europe. Economic deprivations such as famine and mass depressions were not major factors; although some economic grievances were involved, this was a period of unprecedented prosperity. The minor recession of the mid-sixties seemed to be unimportant. If anything the youth activists were uncomfortable with their affluence, and their rejection of the "whole system" was done in the name of ideal humanity. As one historian wrote of the new left,

> ...its motives were relatively pure, disinterested, idealistic. Its innocence might be staggering and its ignorance terrifying, but it could claim to be the first revolutionary movement in modern history without an axe to grind. Marx asked the proletarian to rise up in order to gain power. Lenin and Stalin sought power in order to seize wealth from its possessors. Strikers demanded more wages, farmers higher prices--all the classic movement of modern protest were frankly materialistic. The new rebels asked for spiritual things. They talked about love and community and not being dehumanized.[41]

This was a new kind of revolution, one based largely on generational solidarity without strong economic motives and clear political goals. The youth of Europe were going to tear down the world and remake it instantly.

As in the past, the revolutionary surges of the 1960s passed quickly. Educational reforms were instituted, economic concessions granted, and established political parties coopted parts of the revolutionary programs. The goals of the youth revolutionaries were so nebulous and divergent that it was virtually impossible to maintain any type of direction and leadership within the movement. The established order, with the usual mixture of repression and concession, split the revolutionaries and won over some of their followers. Some of the

revolutionaries went underground to organize terrorist groups; others were absorbed in the establishment; most just went home. The total changes caused by the revolutions of the 1960s were limited compared to 1830 or 1848, but that is not surprising when one considers they were demanding the impossible.

VIII. Conclusions

The application of the Egbert/Kluender theory of demographic discontinuity to select European countries in the past two centuries offers some provocative conclusions. The theory provides an additional explanation for youthful unrest at given historical periods, an explanation that historians and social scientists have not adequately studied. It was generally understood, after the experiences of the post-World War II baby boom, that any sizeable demographic change passing through society's institutions would cause a good deal of unrest, but the parallels between rapid generational growth and historical unrest would seem to indicate that this is far more important that most researchers have assumed.

The theory also gives credence to the oft-leveled charge of the young that societal institutions are too slow in responding to the needs of the day. To youth confronting static situations without the prospects of employment, opportunities for study and the possibilities of sharing power, the slowness of societal changes must indeed seem infuriating. When this coincides with other socio-political grievances already within the adult society, a potentially volatile situation occurs. Youthful response can take many forms ranging from the development of a youthful subculture which supplies the needs that adult society has not given, to political protest, to indeterminate violence in the

form of crime and terrorism, to alienation and withdrawal through drugs and religious cults.

Youthful protest and activism is also more difficult for society to deal with since it is invariably associated with challenge to the prevailing value system, and it normally comes from the best and brightest of the young. Psychologically, youth is the time of challenges to the world when the young must seek to deauthoritize its world, but this makes it doubly difficult for the adult world to tolerate. One suspects that the sharp repression meted out to the young by the older generations at the times of disorder is in part the product of a challenge to its authority, but more important, an attack against the essence of a society. By attacking the basic values of a society, the young are touching on the most painfully vulnerable spot, the difference between what a society believes and what it is. Youth's focus on what ought to be instead of what is, is a reminder of the limitations and fragility of human life.

The theory of demographic discontinuity seems to apply better to the 20th century than the 19th. There is more generational awareness in the 20th century, but this might be a product of the social, economic and educational trends which have lengthened entrance into adult society and considerably widened the number of youth involved. In particular, the economic and educational patterns of the 20th century have tended to identify and separate out for a long period of time a much larger group of young than did the 19th century. This, combined with the general intellectual disposition to understand youth as a separate stage in human development, has strengthened the generational solidarity of the young.

Based on the European experiences, the theory's predictability might be summarized as follows: the more sudden the increase in the youth generation and the more rigid the existing societal structures, the greater the possibility of youthful activism, especially if associated with general underlining economic or political grievances. This implies some degree of urbanization so that a "critical mass" of young is located in urban areas. The theory's usefulness as a predictor would appear to be in the underdeveloped or better, developing world, than in Europe proper. Here all of the ingredients that caused the European disorders are present to an unprecedented degree compared to Europe. This would not discount the possibility of further youthful unrest in Europe as the 1960s proved, but rather the emphasis should be on the underdeveloped nations.

Finally, the theory of demographic discontinuity enhances understanding of the most complex and perplexing social phenomenon of generations. As Professor Feuer noted, "This conflict of generations, disenthralled of its demonry, becomes a drama of sustenance and renewal which remains the historical bearer of humanity's highest hopes."[42]

Footnotes

1. John R. Gillis, Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770 to the Present (New York, 1974), p. 54.

2. Herbert Moller, "Youth as a Force in the Modern World," Comparative Studies in Society and History 10 (1970):248-49.

3. Peter Loewenberg, "The Psychohistorical Origins of the Nazi Youth Cohort," American Historical Review 76, 5 (December 1971):1465. See also Norman R. Ryder, "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change," American Sociological Review 30 (1965):843-61, for a general discussion of this concept.

4. Rudolf Heberle, Social Movements: An Introduction to Political Sociology (New York, 1951), pp. 119-20; Alan B. Spitzer, "The Historical Problem of Generations," American Historical Review 78, 5 (December 1972): 1353-85; Robert L. Tyler, "Of Generations, Generation Gaps and History," Connecticut Review 5 (1971):5-12; Allen T. Lambert, "Generations and Change Toward a Theory of Generations as a Force in Historical Process," Youth and Society 4, 1 (September 1972):21-45; all discuss the application of generational history.

5. Heberle, Social Movements, p. 119.

6. Philip Abrams, "Rites de Passage: The Conflict of Generations in Industrial Societies," Journal of Contemporary History 5, 1 (1970):177.

7. Friedrich Heer, Challenge of Youth (University, Alabama, 1974) p. 7; Lewis S. Feuer, The Conflict of Generations: The Character and Significance of Student Movements (New York, 1969), pp. 6-7; 14-15.

8. Gillis, Youth and History, p. 3.

9. Feuer, Conflict of Generations, p. 11.

10. Anthony Esler, Bombs, Beards and Barricades: 150 Years of Youth in Revolt (New York, 1971), p. 49.

11. Feuer, Conflict of Generations, p. 57.

12. John Plamenetz, The Revolutionary Movement in France: 1815-71 (London, 1952), p. 34; Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France, Vol. 2 (New York, 1977), p. 92; Esler, Bombs and Barricades, pp. 83-85.

13. Cobban, Modern France, p. 93.

14. David Pinkney, The French Revolution of 1830 (Princeton, 1972), p. 257; further see Gillis, Youth and History, p. 75 and R. Tilly, "Popular Disorders in Nineteenth Century Germany," Journal of Social History 4 (1970/71):15-16.

15. Esler, Bombs and Barricades, p. 115; Feuer, Conflict of Generations, p. 32-33.

16. Cobban, Modern France, p. 92; Gillis, Youth and History, p. 54; Heer, Challenge of Youth, p. 35.

17. Konrad H. Jarausch, "The Sources of German Student Unrest, 1815-1848," University in Society, Vol. II, edited by L. Stone (Princeton, 1974), pp. 551-53, 558; Plamenetz, Revolutionary Movement in France, p. 63.

18. Esler, Bombs and Barricades, p. 115.

19. John R. Gillis, Prussian Bureaucracy in Crisis, 1840-60 (Stanford, 1971), p. 43.

20. Lenore O'Boyle, "The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe, 1800-1850," Journal of Modern History 42, 4 (December 1970):471-95.

21. Heer, Challenge of Youth, p. 52; further see Rolland R. Lutz, Jr., "Fathers and Sons in the Vienna Revolution of 1848," Journal of Central European Affairs 12 (1962):161-73.

22. Tilly, "Popular Disorders," p. 39.

23. Gunter Moltmann, "Nordamerikanische 'Frontier' und deutsche Auswanderung soziale 'Sicherheitsventile,' im 19.Jahrhundert?" Fritz Fischer Festschrift, Industrielle Gesellschaft und politisches System (Bonn, 1978), pp. 279-96; P. Marschalck, Deutsche Ueberseewanderung im 19.Jahrhundert (Stuttgart, 1973).

24. Brendt Schiller, "Years of Crisis, 1906-1914," in Sweden's Development from Poverty to Affluence, editor Steven Koblik (Minneapolis, 1975), pp. 205-13.

25. Franklin D. Scott, Sweden: The Nation's History (Minneapolis, 1977), p. 369.

26. Sven Lunkdvist, "Popular Movements and Reforms, 1900-1920," in Koblik, Sweden's Development, pp. 180-93.

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28. Paul Wilkinson, "English Youth Movements, 1908-1930," Journal of Contemporary History 4, 2 (1969):22.

29. Samuel Hynes, The Edwardian Turn of Mind (Princeton, 1968), pp. 26-28.

30. Cf. Sterling Fishman, The Struggle for German Youth: The Search for Educational Reform in Imperial Germany (New York, 1976) and John R. Gillis, "Conformity and Rebellion: Contrasting Styles of English and German Youth, 1900-1933," History of Education Quarterly 13 (1973): 249-60.

31. Alexander Sedgwick, The Third French Republic, 1870-1914 (New York, 1968), pp. 36-37; 82-84; 128-30.

32. Heer, Challenge of Youth, pp. 78-81; 84-86; Feuer, Conflict of Generations, pp. 3-4; 100-104; 140-46; Esler, Bombs and Barricades, pp. 121-25; 131-38. See also Avrahm Yarmolinsky, Road to Revolution: A Century of Russian Radicalism (New York, 1962) and Moller, "Youth as a Force," pp. 249-52 on Greece and Hungary.

33. Carl-Goran Andrae, "The Swedish Labor Movement and the 1917-1918 Revolution," pp. 232-57; Lunkdvist, "Popular Movements," pp. 180-93 and Sune Akerman, "Swedish Social Development and Emigration," pp. 167-76, all in Koblik, Sweden's Development.

34. On French youth see Feuer, Conflict of Generations, pp. 270-75; 279; on British youth see Arthur Marwick, "Youth in Britain, 1920-1960," Journal of Contemporary History 5, 1 (1970):37-52 and Wilkinson, "English Youth Movements," pp. 22-24.

35. Loewenberg, "Nazi Youth Cohort," p. 1472.

36. Wolfgang Zorn, "Student Politics in the Weimar Republic," Journal of Contemporary History 5, 1 (1970):131-32.

37. Walter Laqueur, Young Germany: A History of the German Youth Movement (London, 1962), p. 191. See Michael A. Ledeen, "Fascism and the Generation Gap," European Studies Review 1 (1971):275-83 over the attraction of Fascism to the young.

38. Juan J. Linz, "Some Notes Toward a Comparative Study of Fascism in Sociological Historical Perspective," in Walter Laqueur, Fascism: A Reader's Guide (Berkeley, 1976), pp. 46-47; 81.

39. Loewenberg, "Nazi Youth Cohort," p. 1458.

40. Gillis, Youth and History, p. 205. For the opposite view see Frank Pinner, "Western European Student Movements through Changing Times," in S. M. Lipset and P. G. Altbach, Students in Revolt (Boston, 1969), pp. 60-95 and Ronald Inglehart, "The Silent Revolution in Europe, Intergenerational Change in Post-Industrial Societies," American Political Science Review (December 1971):991-1018.

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